

Parent Primer



On Career
Exploration

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Parents Make A Difference!

Who Has The Most Influence Over Teens Making Career Decisions? Parents Do!

Research over the past 20 years indicates that parents play a major role in the career decision making of their sons and daughters. There are many resources such as this guide that provide the information parents need to help their children with education and career choices in the immediate future. Parents are influential throughout childhood. You may not even be aware of the many ways you contribute to your child's early career development.

Parents are often the primary source of their children's work values and attitudes.

- Career decision-making skills have been linked to early childhood experiences, family attitudes and practices regarding careers, and role modeling by mothers and fathers.
- Parent expectations and support contribute significantly in helping their children have the maturity to make career decisions.

Ask your children what they want to be when they grow up? Most likely you'll hear doctors, lawyers, professional ball player, model, actor, rock and roll singer, etc. The younger the child the more unrealistic the choice may be. In most cases, they don't know what these occupations do, but there is some aspect that captures their interest.

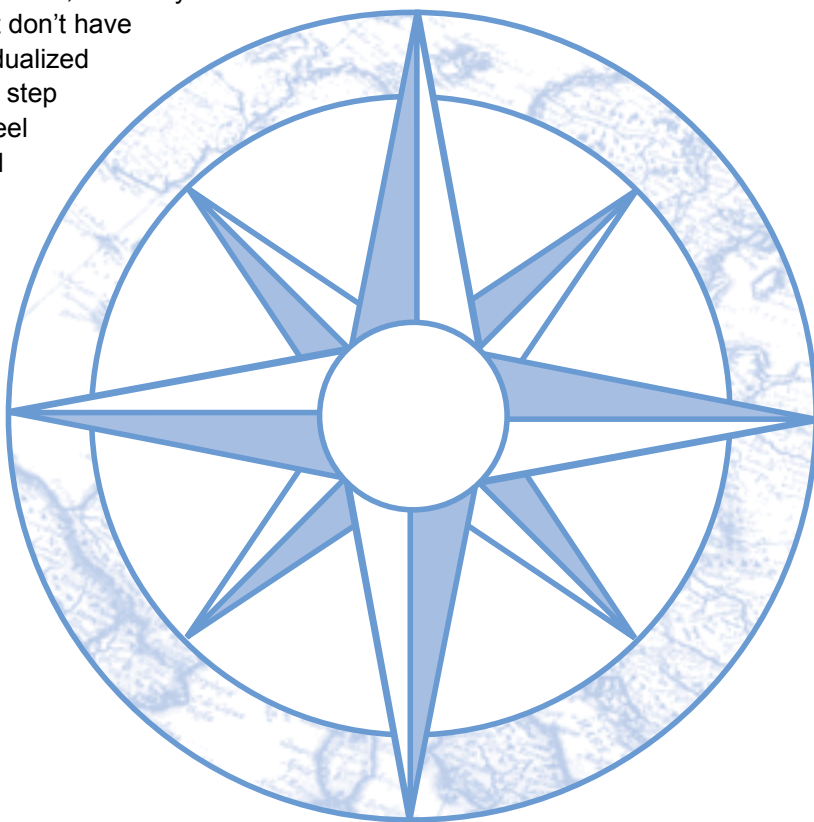


Why Career Exploration ?

For the most part, teens' initial career plans are not well informed, realistic, or likely to succeed. This is where career exploration can help.

- **Career exploration provides a reality check.** It helps them to explore occupations and learn about the job descriptions and requirements.
- **Career exploration expands your teen's horizon.** How many occupations can your teen list and describe? Career exploration exposes them to occupations they didn't even know existed.
- **Career exploration saves time and money.** When teens choose education and training that matches their abilities, they are less likely to change majors and more likely to complete their education. Others may choose areas in which interest and motivation are lost once they are employed. This could result in overall dissatisfaction with their career.

Schools try to meet the career needs of students, but many times school counselors and teachers just don't have the time or resources to provide individualized career guidance. This is where you can step in and act as a career advisor. You may feel that you are uninformed in the process and unable to provide the guidance that your child needs. This publication will help you better understand what is happening in the labor market and how you might help your children make more informed choices about their future.



Accentuate The Positive

Do your children always seek out your advice and listen attentively as you try to give them assistance? Probably not! All parents want their children to succeed and to have a life better than their own. It's only natural for parents to want to influence their children's future. Career exploration with your child gives you an opportunity to do what that old song says . . . "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, and don't mess with Mr. In-between!"

- **Your attitude matters a great deal!** Stay positive! The work place today is ever-changing and may seem scary to your children. Don't make the past seem perfect and the future terrifying. Knowledge is power. So, encourage your children to get as much information and take advantage of as many opportunities as possible.

- **Don't say no!** Don't shoot down ideas your children may have about their future careers. If you react negatively, it may shut down the whole communication process. Keep the lines open as you encourage them to gather as much information on a particular career as possible. That research may provide the results you'd imagined in the first place.

- **Jump on opportunities!** Informal discussions about the world of work with your child can be as productive as time that is scheduled. Jump on those "teachable moments" in conversations with your child.

- **Please do it "Their Way!"** Your goal is to help your children find their own way. The career exploration process is a great way to practice "letting go." By discussing interests, dreams, and goals, you can get to know your children better. And, if their approach seems a little different than what you would do, remember—it's their way!

- **Step Outside the Box!** Here's a chance to play sociologist or teacher and observe your child. What does she/he like or dislike? How do they work, play, or interact with others? This will help you see your child in a different light and provide you with valuable information to assist them in career exploration.

Use these suggestions to help your child plan his/her future. Remember that it is your child's future! It is your role to separate your innermost desires and wishes from that of your child. Help them reach their own dreams.

The Steps to Making Career Decisions

The best way to begin career exploration with your children is by talking about your own career. What do you do in your job? What decisions did you make that led you to this point in your career? Teens aren't always overly interested when parents begin to share their wisdom with them. As a parent, you want to help guide your children as much as possible when making decisions that will impact their careers, but the questions are, "When do I begin?" and "How much do I offer?" There are many critical points where your children will need your assistance.

You can begin to discuss career exploration as early as elementary age to help build self-confidence and career awareness. A good activity to use with your children, regardless of age, is to discuss occupations that you observe in everyday life and what those jobs may entail. Teaching children responsibilities and the importance of completing tasks at an early age are skills they will use regardless of what career they choose to follow.

The career decision-making process described below includes activities that can begin in middle school and continue into high school and postsecondary education.

You can help your children complete each of the steps.

Step 1- Learn More About Yourself.

Teens - Take interest and ability assessments. Many schools offer these at different grade levels. Additional activities include learning more about your values and personality as to how it relates to work. You can also learn more about working in different environments with part-time or volunteer work and by visiting different work sites. Visit www.florida.echoices.com to review various self-awareness activities.

Parents – Who knows your child better than you? Review the results of the assessments with your children. Discuss his/her interests and dreams to help determine goals for the future.

Step 2 - Identify Some Possibilities.

Teens - Explore a wide range of occupations in a variety of fields that match the results of the assessments. Narrow the list of occupations by using criteria such as education level, salary, working conditions, etc. Research each occupation that you find interesting.

Parents – Help your child to explore a variety of options. Discuss the duties and tasks and requirements of different occupations. Review postsecondary opportunities that may include college, community colleges, technical centers, the military, and apprenticeships.

Step 3 - Evaluate Your Options.

Teens - Analyze each occupation by comparing the negative and the positive aspects. How much education will you need? How will you pay for your education?

Parents - You and your child may also want to consider lifestyle implications and the overall impact on life for each option. For instance, will the job require irregular hours? Will the salary support the lifestyle your child wants? How much education does the occupation require? It's important for your child to understand the relationship between lifestyle, occupational choice, and educational pursuits. Help your children understand and balance the difference between wants and needs.

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Step 4 - Make A Choice

Teens - Decide on a general field of interest. There are many jobs that don't exist today but may in your future. It is still best to choose a career area rather than a specific occupation to pursue. Think about the kind of lifestyle you want. Prepare a budget using the salary range of several occupations of interest. Will your potential earnings support your desired lifestyle?

Parents – Encourage your child to explore a variety of career areas. The economy, demographics, and technology will continue to change the workplace. Some jobs become obsolete while other new jobs emerge. Some occupations may maintain the same title, but they may change or evolve so drastically that they no longer resemble what they were a decade earlier. As the workplace continues to change, it will be more important to focus on groups of similar skills and how they can be transferred from one occupation to another. Help your child to build a budget so that he/she understands what expense items will come out of a monthly income.

Step 5 - Create An Action Plan

Teens - Outline activities and develop a timetable to complete them. Design a career and education plan with the steps needed to achieve the career goal. Seek out opportunities for part-time work, job shadowing, volunteering, attending career fairs, and other activities that will help you learn more about the workplace.

Parents – Some schools have students complete a 4 -year program of study for high school at the end of the eighth grade or early in the ninth grade. Planning and organization give direction to your children's future. Encourage your child to take challenging courses that include lots of math and science. If you haven't already started a savings plan for college, you will want to investigate financial aid and scholarship options. Financial aid should be considered as early as eighth grade (and financial planning during the elementary years, if not sooner). Why? Many of the scholarships will be based on achievement and required courses through the high school years.

Step 6 - Take Action

Teens – Make sure you follow your timeline. Review short-and long-term goals and take steps to reach them. Update your plan as needed.

Parents – Encourage your child to stick with a rigorous school curriculum to build a strong foundation in math, reading, writing, computer skills, and science. The stronger the foundation, the more career options will be available later in life.

Step 7 - Review and Revise

Teens – At the 10th grade level, you should have identified some options for what you plan to do after high school. The FCAT will be a critical test to pass this year, but you will also need to start thinking about the SAT or ACT that is required by most colleges as part of the entrance qualifications. If college is part of your plan, the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) can help you identify any academic areas that you need to strengthen. Keep that career plan handy. You may experience many changes from 8th grade through each grade level in high school that impact goals you set early on. Make adjustments as you go along.

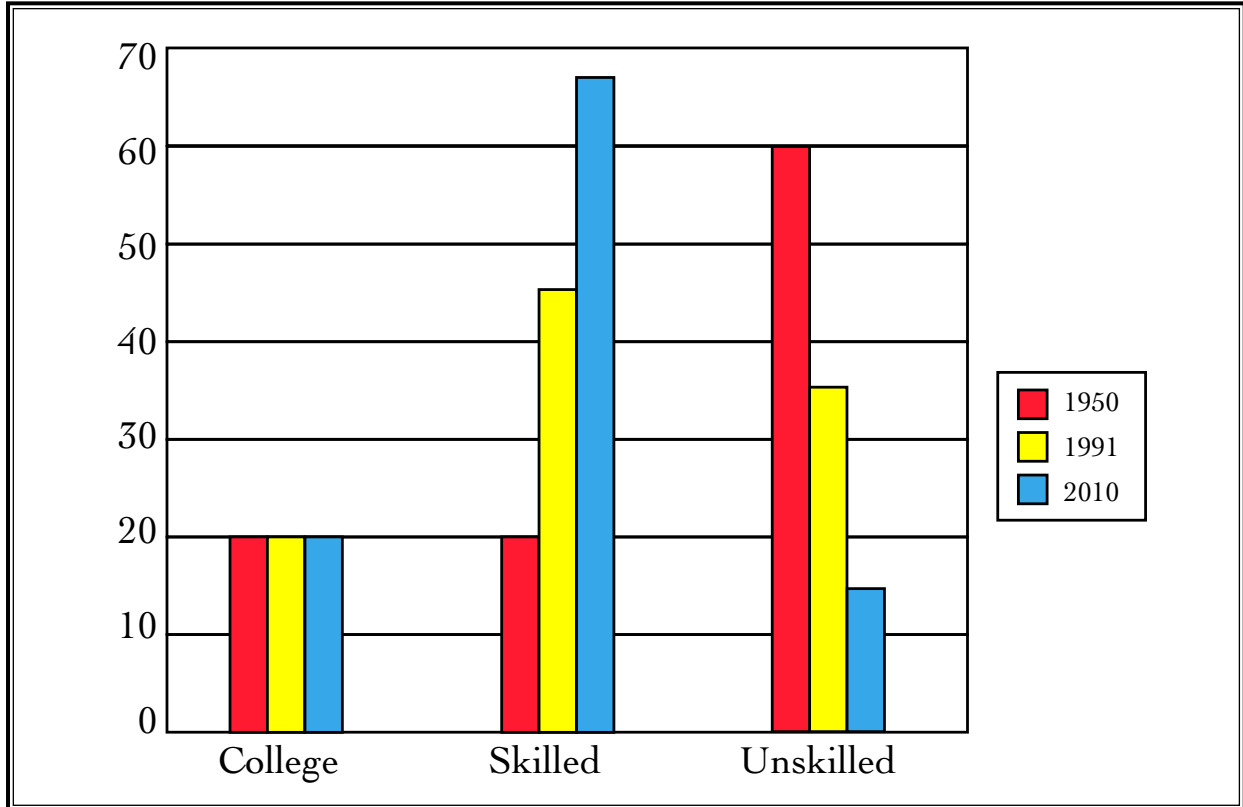
Parents - As your child matures and gains more experiences, his/her interests may change. Course selection in high school can determine your child's course of action after graduation. For instance, if your child wants to go to college and she/he hasn't taken the required courses, remedial courses may be necessary. Help your child to stay on target by taking the necessary courses. Remember that all plans should be flexible in case your child wants to change some of the goals she/he set earlier on.

Workforce And Workplace Changes

In the workplace of the 21st century, workers will need to be better educated to fill new jobs and more flexible to respond to the changing knowledge and skill requirements of existing jobs. Even as working parents, you may not be aware of current job projections and workplace trends that impact your children's education and future careers. We read in the news every day about businesses filing bankruptcy or closing, company layoffs and downsizing, and even jobs being transferred to foreign countries. If you have been impacted by any of these changes, you know first hand how competitive the job market can be. One thing we can be sure of, technology, economy, and social issues will continue to change the workplace.

Changes In Education Requirements

It is projected that 65 percent of all new jobs created by 2010 will require some education and training past high school, but not a college degree. The chart below shows that the number of occupations that require a college degree has not changed in the past 50 years. Today and in the future there will be excellent job opportunities that require a certificate or associate's degree.



Changes In Skill Requirements

During the past two decades, the skills needed to succeed in the workplace have changed significantly. Basic skills such as reading, writing, and math are a must. Technical skills are also important, but employers have begun to recognize that there is another set of skills that are crucial to a worker's ability to work "smarter, not harder." Frequently, these are referred to as "soft skills." What are employers saying that it takes to be successful? They want their employees to have:

- **Flexibility** - Adapt to changes in the work environment as opposed to coping with a stable work environment.
- **Problem Solving** - Solve unforeseen problems on the job as opposed to referring unforeseen problems to others.
- **Teamwork** - Do their best work in teams as opposed to doing their best work independent of others.
- **Life Long Learning** - Continue to expand skills as the company changes and grows rather than focusing entirely on specified duties and skills of their present job. Always be open to learning new ways of doing things.

Important personal qualities are responsibility, dependability, punctuality, attitude, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and honesty. These are skills that one develops at home, school, and with other experiences. Parents play a big role in helping their children develop these attributes. For instance, encourage your children to be independent thinkers and problem solvers. Don't make all their decisions or solve all their problems. Involve them in the process.

In addition to connecting skills to the workplace, choosing a major or program of study at a post secondary institution can be critical in finding a job. For instance, choosing a major that relates directly to specific "in demand" occupations can make it easier to find work. Students in health service fields such as nursing, physical therapy, and radiography have much higher rates of getting jobs related to their training than people with degrees in liberal arts or social sciences. These may not be "better" than other majors, but there are advantages to choosing those majors.



What Jobs Are In Demand In Florida?

Consider these labor market facts:

- Florida employers want better educated and higher-skilled workers as the economy continues to be more knowledge-based and less production based.
- Health care, education, information technology and engineering are areas that will have a large amount of job openings.
- Services will continue to be the fastest growing major industry and will generate the most jobs through 2010.
- Medical careers dominate the list of top paying careers.

There are hundreds of job classifications in Florida. The list below will give you an idea of the top 40 jobs. You will see that most of these “opportunities” require some type of postsecondary training. Even though some jobs require a college degree, there are many certificate-type programs available at a technical center or community college that may qualify a person for an entry level position in the same area. If you want to study Florida labor market information in more detail go to www.labormarketinfo.com and click on LMI.

Top 20 Jobs That Require A Certificate Or Two-Year, Associate's Degree

Job Title	2002 Av. Hr. Wage	Education Level Required
Registered Nurse	\$22.31	Associate's degree
Dental Hygienist	26.66	Associate's degree
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officer	21.22	Certificate/Associate's
Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigator	22.61	Certificate
Respiratory Therapist	19.34	Certificate/Associate's
Computer Support Specialist	17.19	Certificate/Associate's
Aircraft Mechanic	20.32	Certificate/Associate's
Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers, Supervisors	22.85	Certificate
Legal Technician (Paralegal)	19.14	Associate's degree
Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairer	18.01	Certificate
Radiological Technologists and Technicians	17.24	Associate's degree
Detective and Criminal Investigator	28.56	Certificate/Associate's
Police and Detective, Supervisors	31.82	Certificate/Associate's
Real Estate Appraiser	22.35	Certificate
Sales Manager	37.13	Certificate/Associate's
Real Estate Broker	32.09	Certificate
Diagnostic Medical Sonographer	22.44	Certificate/Associate's
Cardiovascular Technologist/Technician	16.34	Associate's degree
Physical Therapist Assistant	19.00	Associate's degree
Database Administrator	26.31	Associate's degree

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Top 20 Jobs That Require Four Or More Years Of College.

Job Title	2002 Av. Hr. Wage.	Educational Level Required
Computer Software Engineer, Applications	\$32.90	Bachelor's degree
Computer and Information Systems Manager	41.37	Bachelor's degree
Computer Software Engineer, Systems Software	32.92	Bachelor's degree
Medical and Health Services Manager	33.98	Bachelor's degree
Pharmacist	38.20	First Professional Degree**
Computer Systems Analyst	28.48	Associate's/Bachelor's
Financial Services Sales Agent	33.89	Bachelor's degree
Data Communications Analyst	29.41	Bachelor's degree
Special Education Teacher, Preschool - Elementary	37,335*	Bachelor's degree
Management Analyst	32.07	Master's
Marketing Manager	35.52	Bachelor's degree
Physician Assistant	29.97	Bachelor's degree
Financial Manager	36.30	Bachelor's degree
Physical Therapist	28.99	Master's
Physician	55.42	First Professional Degree**
Public Relations Manager	36.79	Bachelor's degree
Lawyer	47.70	First Professional Degree**
Speech and Language Pathologist	24.42	Master's
Teacher, Secondary School	37,335*	Bachelor's degree
Special Education Teacher, Secondary	37,335*	Bachelor's degree

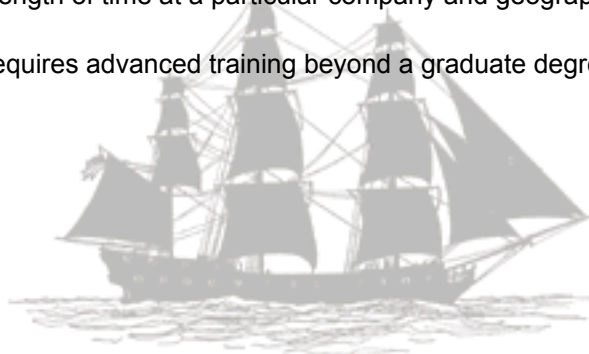
•Average annual salaries vary according to contract and hours worked. Source: Florida Department of Education

• Information Source
Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, Labor Market Statistics.

* Average Hourly Wage

2002 average of the hourly amount made by all the people employed in Florida in the particular job. This is not necessarily the amount you will be paid when you first start this job. Wages vary by experience, responsibility, performance, length of time at a particular company and geographic area.

** First professional: Requires advanced training beyond a graduate degree such as medicine (MD)



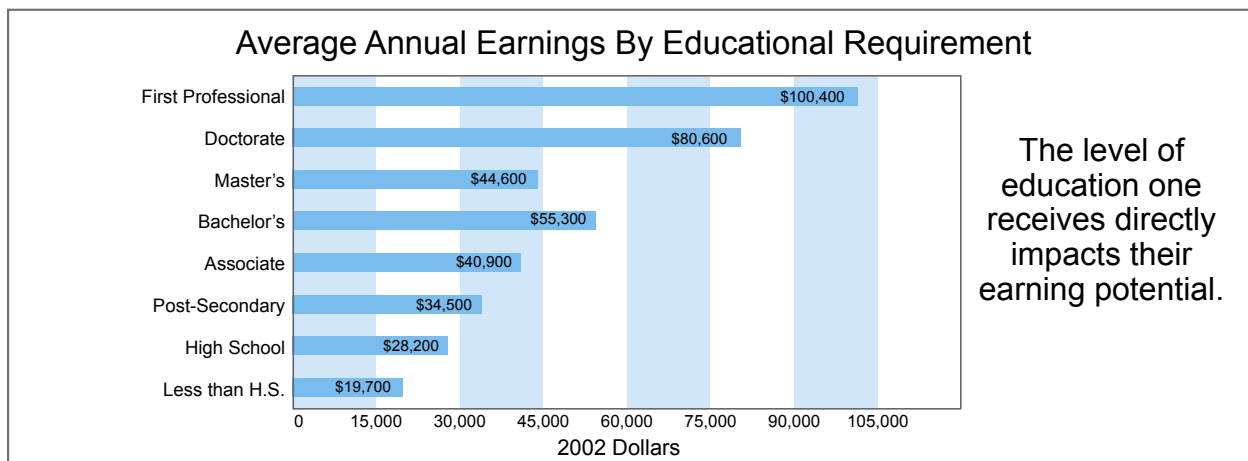
How Can Your Children Prepare For This Changing Workplace?

- Develop a career and education plan for high school that includes high school courses, graduation, and postsecondary plans.
- Develop skills in using and interpreting labor market information and job projections.
- Understand that the more education you get, the more job options become available.
- Broaden focus of exploration from one occupation to occupational clusters.
- Focus on developing and identifying skills that can be transferred from one job to another.
- Develop employability skills that include resume writing, searching for a job, and interviewing.

Life After High School

You can help your children to make informed decisions about education and training after high school. They should be aware of job opportunities available with a high school diploma and those that require more education. It is projected that by 2010, over 85 percent of all jobs will require some type of postsecondary education or training.

While there are many things to consider when making career choices such as interests and abilities, the chart below shows that the more education you get, the higher the salary. This criterion should be balanced with lifestyle expectations. Help your child develop a budget using the average wage of an occupation he/she is considering. Will this choice support the lifestyle your child wants?



Note: These are wages for everyone working in an occupation that requires a specific educational level, not the wages of everyone with that type of degree or training. Many workers who have master's degrees work in occupations that only require a bachelor's degree. In this situation, those with master's degrees may earn more than the others in that occupation who only have a bachelor's degree, thus causing the average wage for bachelor's degree occupations to be higher than the average wage for those occupations that actually require a master's degree.

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Listed below are some educational options to consider:

Apprenticeship

Students can learn a skilled trade by combining classroom training at career and technical centers with paid on-the-job training. Most apprenticeships take two to five years to complete, depending on the trade. Go to www.firn.edu/doe/apprenticeship/index.html for more information.

Military

There are five branches in the military: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard. Serving in the military can provide many educational opportunities. There are over 2,000 job specialties for enlisted personnel and over 1,500 jobs for officers. Some of the opportunities include mechanics, electronics, and business. Many people learn skills and receive training that they can immediately translate into careers in the civilian workforce.

Career and Technical Centers

Students can begin to learn some job skills while still in high school and continue training at a career and technical center. Programs vary in length and classes may be offered during the day and at night. Many courses are linked to apprenticeship programs. In many areas, students are awarded certificates in a field of expertise or are prepared for necessary licensure.

Community College

Community colleges have a wide variety of classes and programs. These programs can be completed in two years or less. Some high schools allow you to take dual enrollment classes and get college credit at the same time. Some students have earned an Associates Degree even before they graduate from high school. After completing these programs, your child can go directly to work or continue their education at a university.

University

Most universities offer four-year (Bachelor's Degree) programs of study and in addition advanced degrees such as a Master's Degree or a Doctoral Degree. Most professional careers require at least a four-year college degree. Only 20 percent of the jobs in the workforce require at least a four-year bachelor's degree.

On-the-Job Training

Your student can acquire some skills in high school that will allow him/her to go directly to work. Getting a job right after high school is an option, but consider that 85 percent of all new jobs will require education beyond high school.



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High School Graduation Options

Students, with guidance from their parents or guardians, have the opportunity to select the graduation option that will most appropriately prepare them for their chosen postsecondary path. See the chart below to review the criteria for each option.

High School Graduations Options Chart 2003-04

Requirements	General Requirements for High School Graduation (4 year)	Standard College Preparatory Program (3 year)	Career Preparatory Program (3 year)
English	4 credits (major concentration in composition and literature)	4 credits (major concentration in composition and literature)	4 credits (major concentration in composition and literature)
Mathematics	3 credits (one of which must be Algebra I or its equivalent)	3 credits at the Algebra I level or above from the list of courses that qualify for state university admission	3 credits (one of which must be Algebra I)
Science	3 credits (two must have a laboratory component)	3 credits in natural science (two must have a laboratory component)	3 credits in natural science (two must have a laboratory component)
Social Studies	1 credit World History 1 credit American History .5 credit American Government .5 credit Economics	3 credits	3 credits
Foreign Language	Not required for high school graduation; required for admission into state universities	2 credits or demonstrated proficiency in a second language	2 credits or demonstrated proficiency in a second language
Practical Arts/ Performing Arts	1 credit practical arts career education or exploratory career education or 1 credit performing fine arts or .5 credit in practical arts and .5 credit in performing fine arts		
Life Management Skills	.5 credit		
Physical Education	1 credit (including .5 credit of Personal Fitness and .5 credit physical education elective)		
Electives	8.5 credits	3 credits	3 credits
Total	24 credits	18 credits	18 credits
State Assessment requirements	Earn a passing score on the FCAT (grade 10)	Earn a passing score on the FCAT (grade 10)	Earn a passing score on the FCAT (grade 10)
Grade Point Average Requirements (GPA)	Earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale	Earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale	Earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale

Earning An AA Degree While Still In High School

Yes, it's possible. Students can earn college credit while in high school. Many students are graduating from high school with a certificate or degree from a career and technical center or community college. Students can consider dual enrollment that allows them to enroll in college-level classes without the cost of registration, enrollment, or laboratory fees. All the instructional materials are free, too. Students need a 3.0 GPA to enroll in college credit courses or a 2.0 GPA to enroll in career and technical certificate courses. Students will also need to pass the appropriate section of the college placement test. Students should see their school counselor for more information.

Parent's Overview Of Financial Aid

Does the expense of higher education make it seem out of reach for your children? There are many ways to support college and any other postsecondary option that your child may choose. Financial aid is available to every Floridian. It can help pay for training beyond high school and make even the most expensive school affordable. Before you start exploring the options for financial aid, there are a few things you need to know:

- Financial aid money comes from state and federal governments, banks, the schools themselves, and private donors.
- You must apply for financial aid. It is not part of the school's admission process.
- Aid is based on a variety of factors, including family income, tuition, academic skill, etc.

Financial Aid Myths

College Is Just Too Expensive

Despite all the publicity about rising costs, a college education is a great investment. In 2002-03, the average cost of a year at a state college was \$4,081. Consider that college graduates earn an average of \$1 million more over a career than high school graduates.

We Make Too Much to Qualify for Aid

Aid is intended to make college affordable for students in a variety of financial situations. Financial aid administrators take into account not only income but also other family members in college, home mortgage costs, and other expenses. Aid is awarded to many families who thought they earned too much money.

I'm not a Straight "A" Student, so I Won't Get Aid

Most scholarships consider grades, but most awards of federal aid are based on financial need.

Private Schools Are Out of Reach for My Student

The key is to pick schools that meet educational, career, and personal needs. Then consider cost. While private schools are more expensive than public schools, the family contribution expected is the same. So higher school expenses also mean a better chance of demonstrating financial need.

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Types of Financial Aid

Scholarships – Assistance given based on academic performance and/or financial need. This money does not have to be repaid. The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship program has several award levels which can pay as much as 100 percent of tuition and fees at a Florida public institution and an equivalent amount at a private institution. Students can visit www.FACTS.org for a comparison of their transcripts with Bright Futures academic requirements.

Loans – A low interest loan that does not accrue interest or require payment until after the student leaves school, for example: Federal Stafford Loan, Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS), Federal Consolidated Loan.

Grants – A sum of money that does not have to be repaid (e.g. Pell Grant).

Work-study – Money earned through part-time employment while attending a postsecondary school. Students work up to 20 hours a week during the academic year.

Private Aid – Financial assistance from a private business or other organization. Many Fortune 500 companies provide aid to students.

Special Aid – Aid for special groups of students, such as veterans, minorities, handicapped, etc. The Federal Department of Veteran's Affairs provides funds for training veterans.

Timing is Everything!

Early planning and research is critical to finding sources of financial aid. Admission applications should be sent in as early as October or November of your child's senior year. Applications for federal aid should be submitted in January. There are other scholarships that will have different application deadlines. Most students who receive aid get a combination, put together in a financial aid "package" by the financial aid office at the school or college they have chosen. High school counselors are also knowledgeable about financial aid and can help students put together applications for a variety of scholarships.

Financial Aid Search Tools

www.florida.echoices.com

Florida CHOICES – Florida's career information system available at schools and Florida eCHOICES on the Internet.

www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org

This is the site for the Florida Office of Student Financial Assistance and includes information about the Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

www.fafsa.ed.gov

Look here for the free application for the Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that will start the entire process for applying for financial aid.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is career development and why is it important?

Career development is a life-long process that begins as early as four years old. It involves self-concept and awareness, career awareness and exploration, learning to make decisions, acquiring work skills, and career planning. Career development includes values, interests, personality, aptitudes, and interpersonal skills.

Should I tell my child what I think would be the best career choice for him/her?

We can help children understand themselves and provide support, but the choice must be theirs.

I don't have any expertise in career guidance. Shouldn't I just leave that up to the school?

Parents are the primary influence on their children's interests, beliefs, values, knowledge, and self-concept. Support and encourage areas of interest and talent. Parents can instill a sense of respect for all types of work and workers. Be sure to talk about your own job. Help your children to experience activities that would expose them to different kinds of work.

How can I support my children's career development?

1. Parents influence the way their children see themselves. If their interests are supported, children are more likely to develop them further.
2. Help them to explore occupations so that they learn more about things they like and dislike in different work activities.
3. Support interests that are different from your own. Don't discourage your children from certain career areas even if it is something you wouldn't be interested in or feel comfortable trying.
4. Parents don't need to point out weaknesses. This only makes children feel bad about themselves. Allow them to discover their own strengths and weaknesses.

How can I be a good role model for my children in their career development?

Be proud of the work you do and the contribution you make to the family and community. If possible, allow your children to visit you at your job. Many workplaces set aside a day for parents to bring their sons and daughters to work.

OK, I understand the importance of career planning. Where do we start?

Self-awareness should be the first step in making career decisions. Interest inventories, work experiences, job shadowing, even observing people at work can help your child to learn about the things they like and dislike about work. Interest inventories can help them narrow down their interests and relate them to occupations. Careers that have a close match to your interests may be more personally rewarding.

How can my child determine his/her abilities?

Abilities are those physical and mental activities that you seem to do easily. It's not necessarily what you know but your ability to do or learn certain things. Sometimes, additional education will help you enhance your abilities. Ability assessments can help you determine your strong areas and how to match those abilities to occupations. Schools often have the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) administered to 10th grade students. While this instrument is helpful to military recruiters, the ASVAB results can be used by school counselors to assist students with examining different career options.

How can my child acquire skills that can help prepare them for the workplace?

Skills are activities that can be learned or developed by education and/or training. Career and technical education courses taken in high school can help your child develop skills and workforce experience. Part-time jobs can also give them work experience. Every job will require them to do certain activities or tasks, and each task will require a variety of skills. Their skills will continue to increase over their lifetime.

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What are values?

Values are the principles that people use to determine how much something means to them. For example, you value your personal time, so you may not want a job that requires travel or weekend work. If you don't want a stressful or risky job, you may not want to consider being a police officer or firefighter. If prestige is important to you, you may want a job that will cause people to look up to you and respect you.

How can I contribute to my children's work skills and values?

Let your children know that the work we do is important and necessary. Teach them the value of reliability, honor, dignity, and effort in the work world and in their own self respect. Household chores, volunteering, and part-time work can help young people develop these traits. These experiences teach responsibility, decision-making skills, and that there are consequences to the choices we make.

Should my children have decided what they want to do by the time they graduate from high school?

It is not uncommon that an 18 year old will be uncertain about what they want in a career. It is better for her to understand herself well, so that she can consider a number of occupations that reflect her interests. Statistics show that people between 18 and 36 years of age change jobs approximately 10 times. We usually evaluate our choices, and if they don't fit our needs, we make adjustments. Career choices are not always permanent.



How can I help my child understand how career choice impacts lifestyle?

Does your child value a lifestyle that includes travel, luxury cars, an expensive home, and lots of other personal possessions? If so, a career that will support this lifestyle is very important. Labor market information will give salary levels that can be expected but depending upon the occupation, a person's motivation can help determine their potential for earning money. Early on it's wise for a person to decide what he/she wants to achieve in life and how he/she wants to live.

No one in my family has ever attended college and we've done just fine. Why should I encourage my child to go to college?

Science and technology are making many jobs disappear and even changing the ones that exist. Our children must be more educated and skilled than previous generations. With training and education, they can match and even surpass our successes.

My daughter wants to be a carpenter or work in some area of construction. I feel that is work more suited for men. How should I advise her?

It's an old belief that men are better at some things and women are better at others. This belief has caused many women in the past to hold lower status or lower paying jobs than men with the same amount of education. Times have changed and you will see men and women in all areas of the workforce. For example, there are many female electricians, plumbers, and carpenters as well as doctors, lawyers, and stockbrokers. On the other hand, men are choosing occupations that have been dominated by women in the past such as nurse, secretary, and hair stylist. It's more important to find a job that will match her interests rather than excluding a choice because of gender.

What resources are being used in schools to get information about careers?

The Florida Department of Education supports Florida CHOICES (www.florida.echoices.com), a career and education exploration program. Online assessments are available for interests, abilities, values, and transferable skills. The results from these assessments can be linked to occupations, programs of study, and postsecondary schools. Most Florida schools use CHOICES with their students. Ask your children if

Parent Primer On Career Exploration

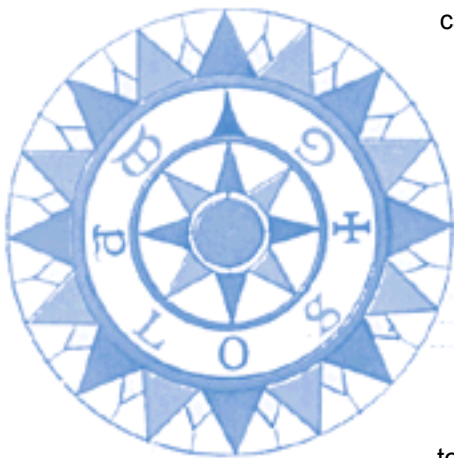
they have used CHOICES. If not, go online at home, a public library, or other places that a computer can be accessed and use the program together. This is an excellent way to begin a career plan/portfolio that can include information from the assessments, career and education searches, goals, and exact plans to reach those goals. There is a wealth of information for students to view such as work-place know-how skills, interviewing techniques, and building a resume. In addition, career and education materials can be found at public, school, and church libraries. If you have access to a computer, there are multiple sites that can help you explore. Be sure that you know the counselors or career specialists at your child's school. They can also share information with you.

How can my child experience different careers?

It might be a good idea for your child to "try out" some different careers. Hospitals, libraries, churches, professional and civic associations all have multiple opportunities for volunteers. Many high schools offer programs like Youth Apprenticeship, Tech Prep, and job shadowing. Colleges and universities may provide co-op and internship programs. Part-time or temporary jobs will also help your child experience different careers.

Why should my child explore career clusters? Don't you have to decide on one job eventually?

Children might believe there is only one career for them, and if that career doesn't work out, they may feel they are inadequate and a failure. Many different careers require similar tasks and skills. If their interests and abilities match one cluster, there are many occupations within that cluster that may match their interests and skills.



My son's school requires that parents sign off on a four-year program of study for high school. How can I help my children make educational choices that will help them in their career development?

Encourage courses in math, science, and language. These courses are required for most college majors and will give your children more career choices later on. Encourage your children to take a wide variety of subjects in school. It's also helpful to plan course work to prepare for a career path. In addition, encourage them to take elective courses in their areas of interest. Many career and technical courses can help them to develop skills that they will be able to use no matter what career they choose.

What kind of information should we collect about occupations?

Ask questions about things that are important to your child. Here are some examples to help you begin exploring:

- What are the tasks performed by this occupation? Do the tasks require interests, abilities, skills, and values that match mine?
- What education does this career require? Where can I get this kind of training? How can I pay for this education? Will I need periodic retraining to stay in this career?
- What is the future of this career?
- What is the typical work attire?
- What are the normal work hours? Are flexible schedules available? Can I work from home?
- Does this job require travel?
- What is the path of advancement?
- What are the health and retirement benefits generally found in this line of work?
- How much money will this career pay?
- What companies hire people for this occupation?
- Do I need to relocate to take this job?

References

The following websites were used to develop the information for this guide:

www.fldoe.org Florida Department of Education

www.labormarketinfo.com Agency for Workforce Innovation, Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.acrnetwork.org America's Career Resource Network, State Parent Resources

This document was produced by the:
Florida Department of Education
Division of Community Colleges & Workforce Education
Office of Workforce Improvement
Career Development and Product Distribution
325 W. Gaines St. Suite 644
Tallahassee FL 32399